



*USS Vincennes (CA-64)*



**Charles Henry Findlay**  
**Machinist Mate Second Class U.S. Navy**  
**28 January 1941 – 13 August 1946**  
**3 November 1950 - 17 August 1951**

Charles was born on 20 August 1923 in Alburdis, Pennsylvania. He attended grades 1-4 at Jefferson School in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and grades 5-8 in Alburdis. He graduated from Emmaus High School in 1939. Prior to entering the Service, Charles worked at Reber-Korn in Allentown as an Apprentice Steamfitter. He enlisted in the Navy as a Seaman Recruit on 28 January 1941. After recruit training at Naval Training Station, Norfolk, Virginia, Charles was ordered to the Atlantic Fleet in Norfolk, where he served aboard Heavy Cruiser *USS Wichita (CA-45)* from 5 April 1941 to May 1941. The *USS Wichita* sailed to Bermuda while he was aboard. Charles was then transferred to *USS Tuscaloosa (CA-37)*, serving aboard her until October 1941, and sailing to Newfoundland, Canada, and Iceland. Charles was then ordered to the Pacific Fleet, and transferred to *USS Vincennes (CA-64)*, which saw action at the Battle of Midway and the Battle of Savo Island. During the Battle of Savo Island on the night of 8/9 August 1942, *USS Vincennes* was on patrol with two sister ships, *USS Astoria (CA-34)* and *USS Quincy (CA-39)*, in waters between Tulagi anchorage and Savo Island, defending the passage between Savo and Florida Islands. Shortly after 0155 on 9 August 1942, *USS Vincennes* came under fire by Japanese ships, ultimately taking two torpedo hits and 74 hits by gunfire. As a result, *USS Vincennes* caught on fire throughout, lost steering, became dead in the water, and listed heavily to port. The Captain ordered the crew to abandon ship at 0216, and at 0250 *USS Vincennes* rolled over and sank into Davy Jones' Locker along with her sister ships in what would come to be known as Ironbottom Sound. Charles jumped into the water, swam to a life raft, and was later rescued and taken aboard another ship. Subsequent to his rescue, Charles served aboard Light Cruiser *USS Santa Fe (CL-60)*, Attack Carrier *USS Antietam (CV-36)*, Escort Carrier *USS Prince William (CVE-31)*, Destroyer *USS Bainbridge (DD-246)*, and *USS Midway (CV-41)*. Charles was discharged from active duty as a Machinist Mate 2/C on 13 August 1946 at Bainbridge, Maryland, and was awarded the American Defense Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and the Philippine Liberation Medal. He then served five years in the Naval Reserve, with one year of active duty from 3 November 1950 to 17 August 1951, when he was discharged. Charles married **May Ann Dietz** (3 June 1922 – 18 August 2006) on 25 October 1945 in Allentown while he was on leave. After his discharge from active duty, he returned to live in Allentown, where he and May lived until 1954. They then moved to Wescosville, Pennsylvania, until 1977, when they separated. May remained in Wescosville, and Charles moved into a house that he moved from its original location near the entrance to Day-Timers, Inc., on Lower Macungie Road, to a site directly behind the Danner-Lichtenwalner Farmstead along the Little Lehigh Creek on Brookside Road. Charles and May divorced in 1982. After the war, Charles worked as a Steamfitter for Steamfitter Local 420 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, performing work for various contractors until his retirement. He then became a Constable for Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, for a number of years. Charles died on 8 August 2002 in Allentown. He is buried at Lehigh Zion Cemetery in Lower Macungie Township. Charles and May had three children: **Elizabeth Ann**, **William Edwin**, and **Lisa Marie**. Charles' parents were **John W. Findlay** (c. 1895 – March 1927), who served in World War I, and **Anna M. Bennet** (23 August 1898 – November 1986). Charles' son William served in the Army in Vietnam. Charles' brother, also named **William Edwin**, was killed in action in World War II.